than the MRP declared on packages Prosecution cases are initiated against defaulters detected under the provisions of the Standards of Weights & Measures Act 1976 and Standards of Weights & Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules 1977 Exhibitions and seminars are organised to make the consumer aware of the provisions of the Packaged Commodity Rules that "no prepack commodity should be sold at the price more than the retail price printed thereon". Under the Consumer Protection Act 1986 a consumer can make complaint in any consumer court set up under the Act for charging price in excess of the price displayed/ printed on the package.

Dalit Christians

1796 PROF PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Dalit Christians may erode SC/ST share in quota" appearing in the "Times of India dated July 1, 1996";

(b) if so, whether the Dalit Christians will be provided the facility of reservation from the reservation quota fixed for SCs/STs, and

(c) if so, the reason for decreasing the reservation quota fixed for the SCs/STs at present and the details of estimated decrease in the quota?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes are recognised as such irrespective of their religion. The Christians among them are, therefore, already eligible for reservation benefits applicable to the Scheduled Tribes. The matter of recognition of Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity as Scheduled Castes is under consideration. Such recognition would entitle them to reservation benefits applicable to the Scheduled Castes.

(c) There is no proposal to reduce the percentages fixed at present for reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

[English]

Projects for Betterment of Scavengers

1797 SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :
SHRI CHITTA BASU :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Commission for Scavengers have since formulated some projects for the betterment of scavengers, and

(b) if so, the targets achieved in this regard, State/ Union Territory-wise?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not applicable.

[Translation]

Expansion of Telecom facilities in Bihar

1798 SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH :
SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the telephone facility available to per thousand population in Bihar is less in comparison to other States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the measures being taken to improve this facility; and

(d) the time by which the telecom facilities are likely to be made available in Bihar at par with other States?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Bihar has a telephone density of 3.3 telephones per thousand population against all India telephone density of 14.19 telephone per thousand.

(c) and (d) The provisioning of equipment of a Circle Depends on the demand of an area which is assessed through the Waiting List of registered demand. The Waiting List of Bihar Circle is 15.1% of the Direct Exchange lines as against all India average of 19%. In 1996-97, 47000 lines have been allotted to Bihar as against Waiting List of 42,481 as on 1.4.1996.

Atrocities on SCs/STs

1799 DR SATYANARAYAN JATIA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases of atrocities on scheduled castes and scheduled tribes during each of the last three years, State/Union Territory-wise, and

(b) the steps taken by the Union Government to check such incidents and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) A *Statement* is annexed.

(b) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 provides for stringent penalties for various kinds of atrocities committed on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by persons belonging to other communities. Rules notified under the Act in 1995 provide a systematic framework and procedures for various measures to deal with atrocities. Central assistance released to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to support measures undertaken by them for effective implementation of the Act has been enhanced from Rs.9.75 crores in 1994-95 to Rs.15.37 cores in 1995-96. These measures include inter-alia, strengthening of the administrative and